General Studies Thematic

Program
Since 1973 General Studies Thematic (GST) has been offering above-average students who want to make the most of their freshman year an exceptional educational experience. An interdisciplinary, team-taught program that in one year satisfies thirty-three units of the General Education requirement, GST provides exciting intellectual challenge and a supportive learning environment for a small group of eager students for their first year. It is also one of the three ways an entering freshman can participate in the Honors in General Education Program.

Because of the supportive community, the curriculum, and active learning experiences, you will learn more in a year than you believed possible, have an intellectual framework on which you can build the rest of your life, and make friends for years to come. You will also complete in one year requirements that most students take two years to complete and be in an excellent position to finish your undergraduate degree, whatever your major.

What is GST?
GST provides the kind of General Education program many universities are trying to figure out how to provide for all of their first year students. GST is thirty-six students and four to six dedicated faculty working their way through the cultural evolution of our species from its Paleolithic beginnings to the present. The class meets about seventeen hours a week for the whole academic year. By the end of the first week, during which we take a three-day field trip to the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, thirty-five other students and the faculty will know you and you will already be working with some of them on class assignments and your first college essay. You will be on the way to meeting your educational expectations in a community committed to realizing the academic aspirations of highly motivated freshmen.

In this supportive, learning community, we turn thirty-three units of the GE requirements into a coherent, meaningful, panoramic view of civilization by relating them and placing them in a historical context. For example, we observe how population trends relate to such developments as the Black Plague, the beginnings of agriculture, the rise and fall of ancient civilizations and nomadic invasions, the ravages of the industrial revolution, and the invention of the steam engine. The GST faculty is dedicated to teaching in new ways, instilling in students the background and skills necessary for a good liberal arts education and for getting the most out of the rest of the university experience.

The Students
Many of your college memories will result from the students you talk to and work with. GST students represent a normal cross-section of college freshmen—former cheerleaders, student politicians, journalists, athletes, book worms, skateboarders, musicians, and dramatists. Their backgrounds are as diverse as California itself. Their majors range from math, computer science, and biology to music, art, and education. The opportunity to know and study with such students is one of the most important things GST offers you; it is often cited by GST alumni as the best feature of GST.

Admission To GST
Selection and admission to GST is by application only. In February or March, GST mails a brochure and application form to all students whom Admissions and Records identifies as qualified prospects. In addition, the brochure and application form can be requested from GST by phone, mail, or from our Web site on the Internet. Selection for admission to GST is based on high school GPA (approximately 3.20 or better); exemption from or a passing score on the ELM; an application letter; and possibly a telephone interview.

If the GST program sounds interesting to you, but you do not think you have enough information to decide to apply, then call us at the GST office, send us an e-mail, or check out our Web site. Priority consideration is given to applications received before May 10th.